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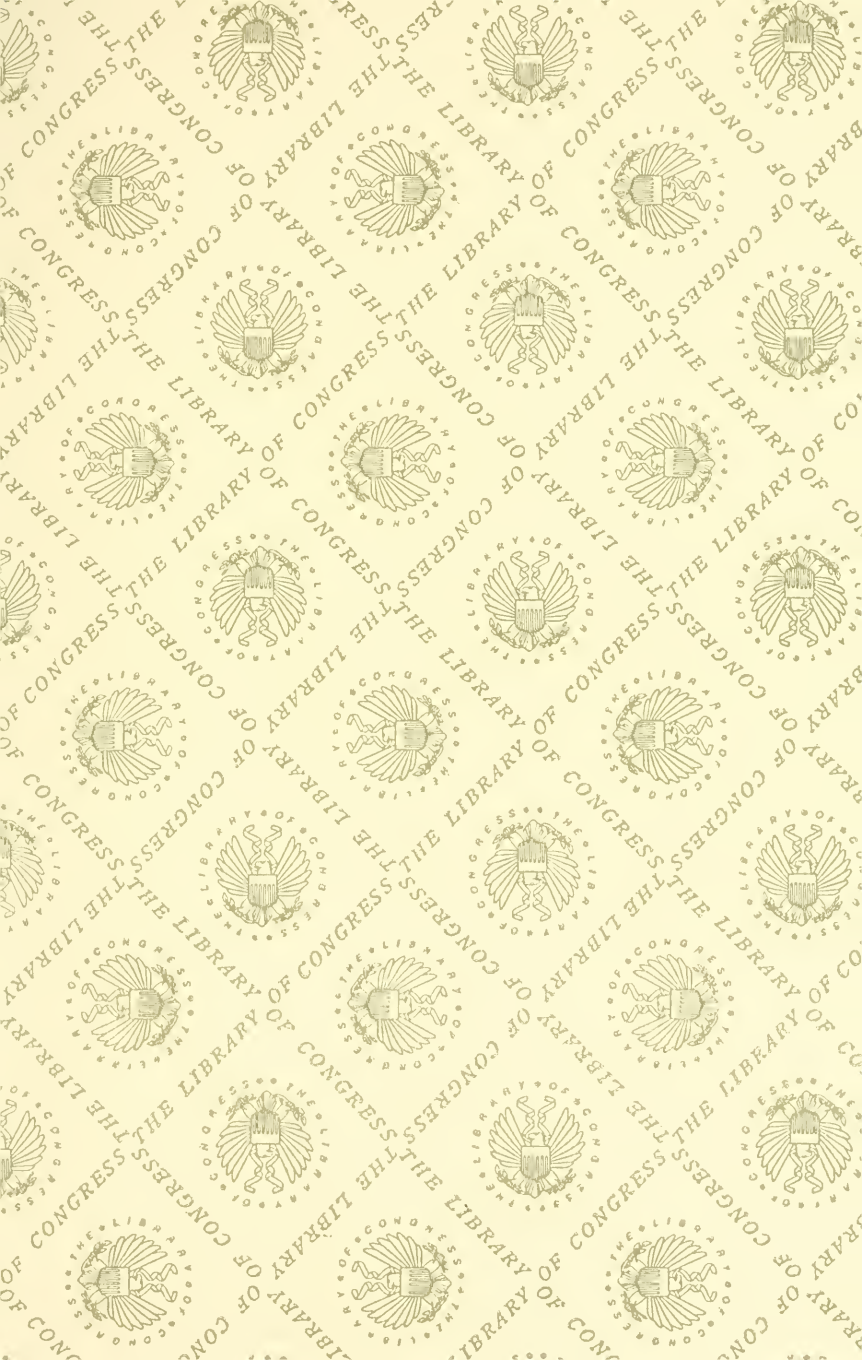
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DAUGHTERS OF FATE

A THREE ACT PLAY OF A ONCE GREAT WAR

BY

NATHAN APPLETON TEFFT

Author of "Journeys of a Soul"



BOSTON
THE GORHAM PRESS
MCMXVIII

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PC 3537
LAW 113

MADE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE GORHAM PRESS, BOSTON, U. S. A.

APR 15 1918

©CLD 49896

no 1

\$1.00 net

To the Daughters of the American Revolution,
many of whom can and have narrated inci-
dents of that conflict, handed down by
their progenitors, this little volume
is dedicated.

APR 15 1918

DAUGHTERS OF FATE

THE CHARACTERS

Dame Cross, A Crippled and Crochety Old Lady
Israel Keene, An Aged Cobbler and an Inveterate
Trouble-Maker

Dorothy Keene, Israel's Granddaughter

Captain Worth, An American Officer

Colonel Buff, Commander of the British Forces

Molly Molasses, An Indian Medicine Girl

Phoebe

Penelope } Colonial Dames

Sophie

Claude

Archibald } English Staff Officers

Cyril

A Squad Officer

A Sentry

A Courier

English Soldiers and Village Dames

DAUGHTERS OF FATE

ACT I

Scene: The public square of a New England village during the American Revolution. The British are in possession of the town, and the people, embittered and excited, are showing their antipathy for the Redcoats. Separated from the thoroughfare by a dilapidated stone-wall, is the dooryard of the home of Israel Keene. On the right is a small Colonial house painted white, with green blinds and a vine-covered lattice over the door. On the left is an old well-sweep half hidden between two tall elms whose umbrella tops furnish ample shade from the burning rays of the midsummer sun. British sentries patrolling the square and squads of soldiers clash with Colonial dames who persist in promenading despite orders to the contrary. Israel Keene, seated on a cobbler's bench against the house, divides his time between mending a boot and shaking his fist at the Redcoats. Dame Cross, a crippled old lady, hobbling by with her walking-stick, is accosted and ridiculed by some soldiers.

Dame Cross

Shame on your faces, devils red!
Your hands are gory from the dead!
Cowards! Persecute and slay galore,
Fathers, brothers, by the score!
Dare one even to resent

Taunts and curses, or repent,
 Lest we spat upon his face?
 Shame, ye creatures of disgrace!

(Dames applaud and jeer).

A Sentry

Keep to silence, babbling dames!
 Look to your graces and your names;
 Wrath and insult can but stir
 This bitter strife to noisy whirl.
 Hie ye all to peaceful homes,
 Your fiery tongues to hold,
 Lest more blood besmear the hands
 That laid your brothers cold.

Israel

(Springing up in temper).

Ye blackguards! ye hawks!
 Dare ye even leap this wall?
 Ye devils of hell! Come one or all.

(Brandishing boot).

Let's see the color of your blood;
 Let me spill it in a flood;
 Let me have a drop—just one,
 To avenge the murder of my son.

(Redcoats laugh).

Ye blackguards! Ye hawks!

Dorothy

(Appearing in doorway).

Israel!

Say no more these awful things;
They only give to passion, wings.

(She leads him, trembling with rage, back to his bench).

Let us have peace.

Israel

Peace, in muck and mire?

Zounds!

Dorothy

But you are putting oil to fire.

Israel

T'will quicker burn these imps of hell.

Dorothy

Israel, don't.

Israel

Ye, child, go and spread the meal;
I'll 'tend to this.

Dorothy

Keep your head, grandsire, please.

Israel

Go! I want revenge.

Dorothy

Please! Please!

(She clings to him, but he throws her off and she returns to the house weeping, as the Redcoats jeer and laugh).

Dame Cross

Laugh, ye wretches of rapine;
Ye beasts of carnage, laughing's fine,
While ye keep swigging from the bowl,
And sorrow fills this old man's soul.

(Dames laugh and applaud).

(Another sentry comes up; he is drunk and staggering).

Sentry

To arms, brave men! How stand ye dumb,
And hear these cattish voices hum
With insults to your kith and kin,
While they, the harlots! reek with sin?

Israel

(Springing up in fury).

Liar!
Curse to him who dare defame
The purity of one fair name.
Get ye to hell, y' coward!

Sentry

Enough of this! Men clear the street;
Sack these damsels by the feet.

*(Dames fight and scream as Redcoats overpower
and kiss them).*

Dame

Shame, you coward! Dare you quench
From me, a thirst for some old wench?

Sentry

A brave man dares to do his duty.

(Kissing her again).

Dame

You devil!

Israel

Kill the rascals! Scratch and bite;

Tear their eyes out; make 'em fight.
 Were their brothers nigh, ye goats,
 They'd ram bayonets down your throats.

(Dames applaud Israel).

Sentry

Hurry men, sack these dames;
 Make them prove their holy names.

(Redcoats drag the dames away. The sentry laughs and turns to Israel).

As for you, my hoary steed,
 A sound drubbing's what you need.

Israel

Come on, ye slandering, wine-soaked cur;
 I'll give those eyes a finer blur.

(Israel hurls the boot he is mending at the sentry, hitting him in the head. The sentry springs over the wall, knocks the old man down with the butt of his flint-lock).

Sentry

Take that for your curses and your taunts.

Israel

Oh God!

(As the old man falls, Captain Worth, an American officer enters, and running along the wall, seizes the Redcoat by the throat, chokes him until he is limp and throws him into the street).

Worth

(Examining Israel's wound).

God, what a blow!

(Hearing voices outside, Worth conceals himself in the well).

Dorothy

(Calling from within).

Israel, Israel.

Worth

(Peering over the well).

Israel.

Israel

Who's calling me?

Worth

'Tis Dorothy.

Israel

Yes, I hear, but who are ye?

Worth

Hush! Can't you see?

Israel

Nay; they've robbed me of my sight.

(Rubbing his eyes).

God, man, where's the light?

Worth

What a pity!

Israel

Speak; are ye a friend?

Worth

I am no other.

Israel

(Trying to rise).

Then kill the rascals, every one;

Make sure the slayer of my son.
Drive the devils back to hell;
Burn and torture; make 'em yell.

Worth

Silence man!
Where's your reason?

Dorothy

(*Calling*).

Israel, Israel.

Worth

Israel, speak; quit playing dead.

Dorothy

(*Appearing in the doorway*).

Israel, come; the table's spread.

(*Discovering Israel on the ground and Captain
Worth in the well*).

Captain!

Worth

Hush!

(Dorothy runs to the well and Worth taking her in his arms, kisses her).

Dorothy

What brings you here?

Worth

Love and duty .
Ah, yes, and to this man's defense,
It seems, as if by Providence.

Dorothy

What's happened?

Worth

A row.

Dorothy

My grandsire's dead?

Worth

Nay, only stunned.

Dorothy

(Kneeling over Israel).

And this abrasion on his head?

Worth

Came from a blow.
The brute who knocked him off his feet,
Is lying prone there in the street.

Dorothy

You slew him?

Worth

I did my best.

Dorothy

(Peering over the wall).

Poor fellow!
We better take my grandsire in.

Worth

We must be cautious. For I,
If found here, must needs die.

(Coming out of the well, and lifting Israel to his feet).

Israel.

Dorothy

It's the Captain.

Israel

Ah, yes! Now I see.
God! child, what a blessing.

*(He throws his arms about Worth's neck and sobs
bitterly. Voices are heard near by).*

Dorothy

Too late; we must not try.

Worth

Who comes?

Dorothy

(Looking down road).

The colonel in command.

Israel

Ragamuffin!

Worth

(Letting Israel fall).

Silence, man! Go stunned and queer;
Nor once betray my presence here.

Dorothy

And I?

Worth

Must grieve and nurse his wound.
And listen—

(Jeers are heard outside).

God, I haven't time.

(Steps back into well).

Dorothy

(Looking down street).

Speak.

The Colonel's halted—gabbing with his men.

Worth

Hush!
An Indian maid will soon be here,
With secret orders from the rear;
And ye and she must chance to meet
As strangers, not as sisters greet.
No word, nor sign, nor look of eye,
Must once betray this little spy.

Dorothy

A spy?

Worth

Ah yes, sagacious little sprite;
She's turned the course of many a fight.

Israel

God! man, now you talk.

Worth

Silence, fool!

Dorothy

Pray, what's her name?

Worth

A name you've oft heard tongues repeat;
The tribal gift for something sweet—
Molly Molasses.

Dorothy

The Medicine girl?

Worth

The same.
She with herbs for every ill,
Can cure the sick, or kill;
And by this clever ruse, you see—
Ministering to the enemy,
She passed the picket lines at will.

(Worth disappears down the well).

Enter Colonel Buff

Buff

Ho, ye guards! Come, turn about;
Sack and bury this drunken lout.

(The guards enter and carry off the sentry. Buff discovers Dorothy who is bending over Israel).

Hi, pretty lass, what's wrong here?

Dorothy

They've tried this poor old man to slay.

Buff

Who is he, pray?

Dorothy

My grandsire, sir—
My only kin and dear to me.

(Falls weeping over Israel).

Buff

(Picking up boot in the street).

This long-eared boot with bloody heel,
Would indicate he made one feel

His fiery temper, as like lead
Hurled against his rum-soaked head.

Israel

(Rising slightly).

Wish to God I'd slain the lout!

Dorothy

Hush Israel!

Buff

(Laughing).

'Twould seem that God your wish had granted,
Since he by now is being planted.

Israel

What man! I've killed him?

(Springing up, his frame shaking with emotion).

Buff

He seemed quite dead.

Israel

God, what news!

(Supported by Dorothy, Israel staggers into the house laughing fendishly and muttering. Dorothy returns).

Dorothy

Please excuse the old man, sir ;
Reason's left him. His brain's a-whir
With fever, and I have fear
That Death already may be near.

Buff

Death, my pretty one, would be a blessing.

Dorothy

Blessing?

Buff

Aye.
Like some cast-off garment, he
Is worn and thread-bare as can be.
All his joints, too, creak with rust.
Aye, lass, better he should go to dust.

Dorothy

Why say such things? He's all I have.

Buff

You must find a new protector.
Have you no lover?

Dorothy

(Glancing towards well).

Lover?

E'en though I had, he may be dead,
Slain by your poison bullet lead,
As were my dad and brother.

Buff

No great task to find another.
You are too pretty, lass, and sweet,
Without a lover at your feet.
What say you now; my years are few;
If he be dead, will I not do?

(Worth's frowning face appears above the well).

Dorothy

You? Why sir I—
You are too hasty sir.

Buff

I say if he be dead.

Dorothy

Oh, but he's not. I—

Buff

Pray tell me how you know.

Dorothy

I—I should have said he may be.

Buff

And if he is?

Dorothy

Sir, I—

Buff

You've seen him lass, and lately, too.
Tell-tale blushes never grew
About such pretty hair and eyes,
'Thout some recent kisses there.

Dorothy

You are confusing me.
Please sir, while my grandsire's ill,
Leave me with my sorrow-cup to fill.

Buff

I'll hie me out and fetch you aid.
I've seen this day an Indian maid—
A pretty thing with herbs and pills.
Ye gods, lass! She alone's a cure for ills.

Dorothy

I'd be grateful, sir, for this.

Buff

So grateful you could lend a kiss?

(Dorothy shrinks from him as he reaches for her hand. Worth appears above the well frowning savagely. Loud laughter is heard outside).

(Enter Molly Molasses. She sprawls herself on top of the stone wall).

Molly

Hallo big chief!

Buff

Hello Molly!

Molly

(Teasingly).

Redcoat, Redcoat. Me like red.

(She climbs over the wall as Buff roars with laughter, and advances toward Dorothy).

Hallo, little squaw.

Dorothy

Hello.

Are you the medicine girl?

Molly

Hm-m, me medicine girl; you sick head?

Dorothy

My grandsire's ill.

Molly

Me make-um well.

(She unfolds and spreads a small blanket on the ground, and swings a deer skin bag from her back. Singing).

Big brave kill-um big black bear;
Little brave kill-um squir'l;
Big squaw spank-um little papooses;
Me little medicine girl.

(Dancing).

Tum-tum wah-wah la la boo,
Heap much wampum,
Buy-um jug o'rum,
Tum-tum wah-wah la la boo,
Me little medicine girl.

(She squats on the blanket).

Me make-um pill?

Me cure big chief Redcoat.
Him love-sick.

(Col. Buff laughs. Molly takes a wooden bowl and several packages of herbs from the bag and spreading them out in front of her, unties each).

Tell me little squaw, what ail-um old man;
Him have heap much pain and fever?

(With every ailment mentioned, she puts a different herb in the bowl).

Dorothy

He has pain and he has fever,
And his brain is all on fire;
On his head there is a sore wound,
From a blow dealt by some ruffian.

Molly

Ugh!

Buff

And he walks with shoulders humped up,
With a drop-stitch in his old back;
And he shakes all o'er with palsy,
And he limps much as a lame duck.

Molly

Ugh!

Dorothy

And his eyes by spells do fail him.

Buff

And his temper knows no curbing.

Dorothy

And his heart is sorely troubled.—

Buff

By his angry passions rising.

Molly

Ugh!

Him very heap much sick all over.

(Grinding herbs in bowl, using a stone for a pestle. Col. Buff picks up two packages of herbs still unopened).

Buff

Two ingredients here you've slighted,
And for fear our memory fails us,
Or by ignorance slight some ailment,
You had better use in mixing.

Molly

Ugh!

(Taking packages from him and holding up one).

This make-um heap much sleepy old man.

Buff

All the better for the curing.

Molly

(Holding up the other package).

Me keep this to kill-um old wolf;
Him be dead puty quick he take it.

Buff

Better still he'd be, and sooner
Would his troubles find an ending.

Molly

Ugh!

Him puty bad, this big chief Redcoat.

(Buff laughs heartily and Molly continues to grind her herbs).

Dorothy

Have you no heart, no sympathy,
For this old man, and none for me?
Why stand you jesting like a knave
While he is hovering o'er the grave?

Buff

For you, sweet one, I have a heart,
But sympathy I have no part,
For this old cursing frowzy-head,
And were he mine I'd wish him dead.

Molly

Ugh!

Dorothy

For me you have a heart of stone,
To wish me in this world alone;
And you could never hope to win
My own, while you are courting sin.
I bid you leave me sir.

Buff

Ha, ha, ha!
Leave you lass? And you bid me?
Ha, ha, ha! Now let me see:
I, the colonel in command,
Taking orders second-hand?
Nay lass; let your lover know.
He's the one to bid me go.

Dorothy

Were he here he'd ——

Buff

Ha, ha, ha!
 And were he, lass, I'd wager gold,
 He'd take you in his arms, and hold
 You closely to his heart,
 As would I, were I his counterpart.

(Dorothy shrinks from him).

Molly

Huh!
 Him heap bad, little squaw.

Buff

Ha, ha, ha!

(To Molly).

You lass, one hardly could ignore;
 You must have lovers by the score.
 Let's taste your kisses.

(As he advances towards Molly she draws a dagger and threatens him).

Ah, ha! You spiteful little miss!
 I'll take no chances for a kiss.
 Let us be friends.

Molly

(Replacing her dagger).

Me fetch water.

Buff

Water say you?

Oh, for mixing of the pill.

You need it fresh then from the well.

I'll fetch it for you.

(As he starts for the well, Dorothy knowing that he will discover her lover, is at her wit's end. She springs towards the house).

Dorothy

Hold, sir, I'll fetch a pitcher.

Buff

You'd better, lass;

A bucket's rather cumbersome.

(Dorothy goes in and returns at once. As she attempts to pass Buff, he reaches for the pitcher. She shies but he blocks her way).

Dorothy

Nay, let me; the bucket leaks.

I fear you'll wet and soil your clothes.

Buff

Will you your own not soil and wet?

Dorothy

I care not for these worn-out things.
Please sir, I the water'll get.

Buff

You can pour, lass; I will draw.

Dorothy

Nay; in drawing there's a trick.

Buff

Then you draw and I will pour.

Dorothy

Oh sir, you're a teasing bore.

Buff

And you, lass, a stubborn little witch.

(He attempts to seize her, but she dodges and runs away, he chasing and cornering her. She throws her arms about his waist and shakes the pitcher frantically at Molly behind his back).

(Molly takes the pitcher and going to the well, discovers Worth. She takes some papers from the folds of her dress and dropping them into the bucket, lowers it singing all the while as she draws the water:)

Tum-tum wah-wah la la boo,
Heap much wam-pum,
Buy-um jug o'rum,
Tum-tum wah-wah la la boo,
Me little Medicine girl.

(Meantime Buff is holding Dorothy in his embrace, she receiving his passionate kisses with apparent helplessness. Molly resumes mixing her pill).

Dorothy

(Struggling free).

Oh sir, you're a brute!
You've arms as strong as a giant's.

Buff

And you, the sweetest kisses ever stolen.

Dorothy

And you did give me such a squeezing.

Molly

Huh! Him bear hugs.

(Buff laughs).

Dorothy

Some day you'll have your pay for this.

Buff

More kisses then will square the debt.

Dorothy

Nay, be gone, you've had enough.

(She runs into the house. Buff roars with laughter and stepping into the street sings back mockingly at Molly:)

Tum-tum wah-wah la la boo,
 Heap much wam-pum,
 Buy-um jug o'rum,
 Tum-tum wah-wah la la boo,
 Me little Medicine girl.

(He throws a kiss at Molly and exits laughing. Molly watches him away and hurriedly picking up her things runs into the house. Worth comes from the well and starts for the house just as Dorothy enters wiping her mouth with her apron).

Worth

(Taking Dorothy in his arms).

That vile, insulting brute shall pay
 Well for his kissing some fine day;
 But would not one or two suffice,
 Without making such a sacrifice?

Dorothy

Nay.
It took quite all he had to give,
And some I gave, to let you live;
But see, no harm is really done;
I've washed them off, quite every one.

(She turns her face up to his and he scrutinizes it carefully).

Worth

Quite right.
Yours is the sweeter love for this;
Ten lives you've saved with every kiss;
Ten maidens' hearts you've robbed of fears,
And tens of mothers of their tears;
And ere another day is past,
You'll have seen and heard the last
Of every Redcoat in the town,
And you, for all, shall have renown.

Dorothy

And what of you?

Worth

Of me think not.

Dorothy

Pray sir, are you bullet proof?
Are you from danger held aloof?

Worth

Nay.
 But doubts and fears have never won
 The smallest battle, or outdone
 The faintest hearts. So bid you me,
 Go forth and fight, and fight for ye.
 And while you've hope and faith and love,
 And I the will of God above,
 I'll fight till Death shall set me free,
 Or bring you back a victory.

(The roll of a drum is heard).

Hark! What means this call?

Dorothy

I know not.
 Away, away, make haste away.
 The sound strikes terror to my heart.
 I fear for you.

Worth

(Taking Dorothy in his arms).

I'll risk a moment's more delay,
 Though every moment means a day
 Clipped from my life.

Dorothy

Nay, nay; make haste.
 Why stay you longer?

Worth

Just to press you to my heart ;
To feel the tender passions rise
Within my own ; and ere we part,
Just to look into your eyes,
And see where love eternal lies.

Dorothy

For you I'd live to love forever ;
To live to love another, never ;
So go you forth and fight for me,
And bring me back a victory.

(He kisses her. Loud voices outside).

Away, away, I fear for you.

Worth

Farewell.

(As he attempts to escape left, he is held up by two guards at the point of bayonets. At the gate, he is met by two more ; and then by the house two more confront him).

(Enter Col. Buff with sentry whom Worth did flog. They discover Worth).

Buff

It is, you see, as I expected.

Sentry

You're right; the very one.

Buff

You do his features recognize?

Sentry

Aye, the very one.
He shut my wind off with a hand,
That gripped me like an iron band.

Buff

Seize him guards.

(Worth is searched and the secret papers found upon him. As he is being taken away to prison, Molly enters and consoles Dorothy who is weeping bitterly).

ACT II

Scene: The prison yard and exterior of block-house where Captain Worth is incarcerated. It is late in the afternoon, and the village dames have assembled about the Captain's barred window and are expressing their sympathy. A sentry is pacing to and fro, keeping close watch. Dame Cross hobbles in, stopping before the window.

Dame Cross

Woe is yours, poor fellow. We
Can offer you but sympathy.
Sick our hearts, our weak hands tied;
By British rule we must abide;
Nor can the picket lines be run,
To summon aid by any one,
So tightly is the cordon drawn.
Woe is yours, and we forlorn.

Worth

Fear I least this doom to death,
Nor tyrant rule, nor bullet's breath;
Fear I most for you, poor dames—
Your chastity, your holy names.
Death to all were better, far,
Than I alone should be the star
Of martyrdom, or one of scorn.
Nay, woe is yours and I forlorn.

(The dames applaud).

Phoebe

He's a brave fellow.

Penelope

And we are weaklings. Come,
Why stand we here so spiritless?
Let's storm the prison.

(The dames cheer).

Sentry

Silence, cats!

Sophie

Cats?

Dame Cross

Cats are we? Then ye are dogs!
Rally dames! With tooth and claw,
Let's show this mongrel whelp the law.

(The dames surround the sentry).

Sentry

Ho! The guards!

Dames

Coward! Coward!

(Enter guards who are met defiantly by the dames).

Sentry

Away, away to your homes.

Dames

Nay! We'll stand our ground.

Guards.

Away, away, we command you.

Dames

Nay, nay, we shall resist.

A Guard

As we'd treat then squirming eels,
We needs must sack ye by the heels.

Dame Cross

Have ye care!

Sophie

Were we men we'd show you fighting;
Broken heads you'd have from smiting.

A Guard

But since you are none but misses,
 You may smite us with your kisses.
 Away, away!

Dames

Nay! Nay!

A Guard

Up men, show your teeth!

Dame Cross

Up dames, use your claws!

(The guards seize the dames who struggle desperately; they are finally overpowered and dragged away. The sentry watches them until they are at a safe distance, then from behind a tree he brings forth a jug of rum and takes a long swig just as Molly enters and discovers him).

Molly

Huh!
 Redcoat heap much coward.
 Him no like-um petticoats.

Sentry

Bah! I'd sooner fight the Devil.

Molly

Him inside the rum jug.

Sentry

Who?

Molly

Dev-ul.

Sentry

More's the reason then for fighting.

(Takes another long swig).

Molly

Him better take care.
Puty quick him make-um tipsy,
Then puty quick him sleep;
Bime-by come along big chief,
And lock him up for keep.

(The sentry roars with laughter and is about to take another drink when voices are heard outside. He replaces the jug and resumes pacing his beat).

(Molly exits).

(Enter Israel and Dorothy. Israel's head is swathed in a bandage).

Dorothy

Go now Israel; seek the Colonel;
Slight no place until you find him.
Bid him come post-haste to me;
Tell him I will grant concessions.

Israel

Ye mean ye'll sacrifice yourself?

Dorothy

Do not quiz me; time is precious.

Israel

Where are your wits, Girl?

Dorothy

Leave that to me. Away!

(Israel exits, disappearing up the road muttering to himself. Dorothy goes to the prison window and speaks softly).

Captain.

Worth

(Appearing at the window).

Dorothy!
I had given up hope.

Dorothy

Every picket held us up.
Have you been sleeping?

Worth

Sleep with Death awaiting me?
Nay; I've been praying.

Dorothy

Praying?

Worth

Aye, for you.

Dorothy

I need no praying for; instead
I should for you be praying
But neither prayer have I, nor tears,
Since something tells me from within,
That you will live in spite of all
The glowering gloom, that weighs as lead
Within my heart. Have hope; have faith.

Worth

Both hope and faith have I, that you
Will let me from this life depart,
Ere you shall offer one concession.
Speak child; you have some secret plan.

Dorothy

You heard us talking?

Worth

I heard the voice of Israel—
Some sacrifice. God! child, let's have the truth.

Dorothy

Think you that I could let you die,
If by some personal sacrifice,
You might have life and freedom?

Worth

Sweet as life and freedom are,
'Twould be a living death did you
But sacrifice a single hair
That I might live. Why summons you the Colonel?

Dorothy

You heard this, too?

Worth

I heard all; what would you do?

(Drawing dagger).

Speak!

I read it from your mind ; but I
Would rather let your lips confirm,
Ere I plunge this dagger deep into my breast.

Dorothy

Hold, lest you be wrong!
Surmises often go astray.
How came you by the dagger?

Worth

The Indian girl's—thoughtful soul ;
She slipped it to me secretly,
That I in some emergency,
Might send it home ; the hour has come.

Dorothy

Hold!
Would this be Love's most kindly act?
Why should you sneak to death, and where,
Think you, would be the gain? Have faith
That I shall bring you through. What e'er
Shall be my wont to do, have faith.
Live on and on, or die for me,
As I would live or die for you.

Worth

Desist!
Show not to me my selfishness,
Lest I in shame must hide my face,
As would some doubting fool.

(He throws the dagger to the ground. Dorothy picks it up and conceals it in her dress. A drum beating is heard).

Hark!
The firing squad is on the move!
They with the sun are keeping pace!

Dorothy

Nay, nay, it shall not be.

Worth

It is a fact; the end is near.

(Two grave diggers pass down the road with spades over their shoulders).

Dorothy

Oh God, I pray thee, stay the sun!

(Looking up the road).

Oh Israel, Israel, make haste!
Why don't they come?

(A shot is heard in the distance).

What's that?

Worth

Some poor devil's beat me out.

Dorothy

Oh, God! It may be he!

Worth

That temper again.

Dorothy

I needs must go myself.

(Starts to go as the drum beats come nearer).

Worth

Stay!

Ere you can go and come I shall be through.

Dorothy

Nay, nay, it shall not be!

(Drawing dagger).

Ere he who would shall give the word
I'll send this dagger home.

(Falling on her knees).

Heaven help me!

(Enter firing squad).

(The prison door is thrown open and Worth is brought out by the officer of the guard).

Officer

By the law of His Majesty, the King,
And the order of the colonel in command,
I've come to perform a painful duty.
This, sir, is the hour of your death.

Dorothy

Stay! A reprieve will be granted.

Officer

I've had no further orders.

Dorothy

The Colonel's on his way;
Israel's gone to fetch him.

Officer

Israel, say you?
He ne'er can fetch again.

Dorothy

What have you done?

Officer

Shot him as I would a dog with rabies.

(Dorothy falls into Worth's arms weeping. The death knell begins to toll).

Come lass, say farewell.

Dorothy

Please, sir, wait; the colonel's coming.

Officer

He ne'er will come; the hour is up;
I must obey.

Dorothy

Please sir, I beg of you!

(Running up to the officer).

I'll go and fetch the colonel.

Officer

Nay, lass; stand aside!
'Tis time this man were through.

Dorothy

You ne'er shall give the order!

(Dorothy draws her dagger, and rushing up raises it over the officer's heart. He seizes her by the wrist, wrests the weapon from her and flings her to the

ground. *Worth attempts to take her part, but is prevented by the guards who throw a ring of bayonets about him).*

Officer

Forward!

(Worth is marched to the prison wall. He turns facing the squad).

Ready! Take aim!

Buff

(Outside).

Hold! Hold!

(Enter Molly and Col. Buff).

(Molly is fairly dragging the English officer by the hand, he puffing and blowing from exhaustion. Molly throws herself in front of Worth).

Hold, I say!

(The gunners present arms. Buff discovers Dorothy on the ground weeping. He lifts her to her feet).

You sent for me?

Dorothy

Yes.

Buff

What sweet story has my pretty lass to tell?

Dorothy

Sweet, say you? What a cruel word,
Since they have murdered Israel;
And now you would the same with him—
My lover.

Oh, spare him for my sake!

Buff

To spare him would make you the debtor;
What then, pray tell?

Dorothy

I'll give my life for his.
Let me your deadly bullets feel;
Let him have life and freedom.

Buff

I'd be a cruel knave indeed,
To slay a pretty lass like you;
And what an idiot since he,
When loose, would take revenge on me.
Nay, nay,

I hardly could agree to that.

Dorothy

What then, pray tell, do you propose—
What greater sacrifice to make?

Buff

'Tis not for me to say, my lass,
 Since you have bid me come, it is
 For you to name the price; and if
 You fail, I see no way to stay the
 Execution.

Worth

Pray let me speak.

Buff

I'll grant this much.

Worth

O Dorothy, beware! The price he seeks
 Is dearer than your life and mine.
 Beware, lest you commit yourself.
 Let me pass on.

Buff

As you will.

(*Turning to the officer of the guard*).

Worth

I'm ready; let your bullets come!

Dorothy

Nay, nay! O God have mercy!

Officer

Ready!

(The guards raise their flintlocks, and Molly springs forward and covers Worth's body with her own).

Dorothy

Oh, please, sir, give me time to think!

Buff

(Taking his kerchief from his pocket and holding it up).

Until I drop this kerchief, lass.

Dorothy

Till morning breaks let him have life.

Buff

Eh! Till morning breaks? What then, pray tell?

Dorothy

I know not yet; my brain is dull.

Oh please, sir, let him live till then!

Buff

On one condition will I grant this stay—

That you until the morning comes will be

My prisoner.

Worth

Nay! Nay!

Dorothy

I do agree.

Worth

Beware! Beware! Oh woe is mine!

Buff

(*Turning to guards*).

Back to his prison, men.

Worth

Would that my prison were the grave!
I fain would die a thousand deaths,
Could I but stay this sacrifice.
Farewell, My Love, farewell!
To all that was and all could be—
To all the light within my soul,
Farewell! Farewell forever!

Dorothy

Desist! Why this despair?
What love is yours, that throws
This doubt upon my faithfulness?
Wait until the morrow comes!
If then my tearful eyes

Shall waver in the light of yours;
If then my stricken conscience sends
Hot blushes to my pallid cheeks,
Your doubting will be justified.

Worth

Nay, nay.
Come not again to torture me.
Farewell! Farewell!

(Worth is returned to his prison as Dorothy falls weeping into Molly arms).

Molly

Ugh, big chief!
Little squaw very much sick;
She have heap much fever.
Me take-um home; me give-um pill;
Bime-by she heap much better.

Buff

Nay.
She must abide with me this night.

Molly

Me bide too; me go.

Buff

Nay, nay.
Hie you to your own wigwam,
And count the stars until you sleep,

Nor let imaginations rob
Your dreams of peacefulness.

Molly

Ugh! Me no sleep.
Eyes have I for waking only;
I have only time for praying.
All the night long, 'till the sunrise,
I shall haunt the evil spirit.
Count I shall the stars of Heaven,
Every one a prayer and pleading,
To the Spirit—the Great Father;
He will hear my lamentations.
In the darkness, in the wildwood,
In the fragrant west wind blowing,
I shall seek Him, I shall find Him,
I shall ask His love and mercy.
To your wigwam I shall send Him,
Send the spirit—the Great Father;
I shall send Him to protect her—
Little white squaw, in your wigwam.

Buff

Praying's not a bad idea,
E'en though it goes unheeded;
'Twill keep you out of mischief, lass,
A thing I fear is needed.

(Buff laughs as he leads Dorothy away weeping).

(Molly raises her hands in silent supplication to the Great Spirit. Revelers can be heard coming along the highway singing).

Eigh! Ho! Eyes to the moon,
 Lips to the gurgling jug;
 Wink ye revelers, drink ye devilers,
 Hail ye a damsel to hug.

(The men can be heard laughing and the dames screaming. Molly seizes the jug of rum left by the sentry, and hurriedly emptying one of her sleeping powders into it, conceals it behind a tree, and exits. Enter dames vigorously protesting the insults of the redcoats who are following and jostling them).

Dame Cross

Cowards!

Penelope

Desist, vile creatures! Give us peace!

A Redcoat

How think you we can resist
 Such tempting creatures, and why desist,
 Since you are wont to brave the night,
 Where you, forbidden, have no right
 To come, and where, on coming, fear
 Lest you shall fail to find us here?

Dame Cross

Falsehood!

Redcoat

Truth!
 You this minute are conniving,
 Lest we know of your contriving,

Sophie

'Tis all imagination.
 We came, a suffering soul to please,
 A loving, aching heart to ease.
 Can you not sense the glowering gloom,
 Between the breaking heart and tomb?

Redcoat

Nay.
 Our hearts are steeled; we sense but joy;
 With women's hearts we fain would toy.
So 'tis—

Heigh! Ho! Eyes to the moon,
 Lips to the gurgling jug;
 Wink ye revelers, drink ye devilers,
 Hail ye a damsel to hug.

(The red-coats seize the dames who struggle to get away. Enter Molly. She is carrying a jug and pretends to be drunk. The red-coats laugh and jostle her about, as the dames look on in amazement).

Dames

She's drunk!

Dame Cross

Shame!

(The dames take up the cry of "Shame" and point their fingers at her in disgust).

Molly

(Paying no heed to her accusers sings and dances with great hilarity).

Big brave kill-um big black bear,
Little brave kill-um squir'l,
Big squaw spank-um little papooses,
Me little medicine girl.

Tum-tum wah-wah la la boo,
Heap much wampum,
Buy-um jug o' rum.
Tum-tum wah-wah la la boo,
Me little medicine girl.

(Molly gathers all the red-coats about her and passes the jug among them; and while thus employed, the dames withdraw in quiet disgust. The Indian girl then resumes her dancing and singing which the men take up and continue until they fall helpless to the ground. She then forces the prison door open, releasing Worth. They both exit).

ACT III

Time: The same night.

Scene: Col. Buff's room at headquarters. The Colonel and three of his staff officers are gathered about a table in the center of the room, smoking clay pipes, drinking wine, and throwing dice.

Archibald

(Taking his turn at the dice).

How's that, my friend? I win!

Buff

Not so. 'Tis best thus far,
But I have yet to try. I'll win.

(Throwing the dice).

Ah! I told you so. The stake is mine.

Claude

Gad, what luck!

Cyril

It runs to some, and I dare say
Another try would end the same.

Archibald

(Seizing the dice box).

Let's see.

Buff

Nay. Fate has decreed.
Three times I've lost and won.
Let's drink to her.

Archibald

To Fate?

Buff

Nay, the sweetest lassie in the land.

(They drink and laugh).

And now a song:

(Archibald, Claude and Cyril sing).

The stars above, sweet lady-love,
Ne'er shown more brilliantly,
Than do thine eyes against the skies,
As they look down on me.
Come to thy window lady-love,
And let those eyes impart
The story dear, I long to hear—
The secret in thy heart.

(Buff opens the door right).

Buff

This way my pretty one.

(Dorothy enters, pale and wan).

Behold ye, ye unfortunate mortals—
The object of your covetousness!

Archibald

Gad! 'Tis Beauty herself!

Claude

Aye, an assemblage of graces!

Cyril

The personification of charm!

Archibald

Aye, all this; but what of her virtues?

Buff

Her virtues, sir, we'll not discuss.

Archibald

But sir—

Buff

Hold!

(The three officers attempt to surround Dorothy, but Buff drawing his rapier drives them back to the door left).

Keep your distance men!
She is my prize, and woe to him
Who would, by word of mouth or sign,
Cast reflection on her name or mine.

(The officers laugh and continue their song).

Sweet lady-love, sweet lady-love,
Awaken from thy dream;
Closer to me I would have thee,
While Heaven's starlight gleams.
Come to thy window, lady-love;
With me, sweet vigil keep,
And in thine eyes I'll seek my prize,
A lover's harvest reap.

Buff

This is too much. Be gone!

(He drives them from the room. Outside they laugh and pound on the door).

Fools! Be gone!

(They continue to pound).

Quit pounding insults on my door!
Be gone, I say, be gone!

(The pounding stops and Buff turns to find Dorothy weeping).

Come lass, with such luck as yours,
Smiles should substitute for tears.

Dorothy

Wherein has luck befriended me?
And think you misery harbors smiles?

Buff

Misery you can well dismiss,
Since you have added life to his—
Your lover's.

Dorothy

When true love waits in aching hearts,
Hours count for naught; even years
Are but a thought, a frightful dream
With death untimely at the end.

Buff

Since true love waits within your heart,
Some sacrifice you'd make, no doubt,
To see the man you love live out
His natural life's e'en though you go

To him devoid of what all men,
Who truly love, do cherish most—
A woman's virtue?

Dorothy

I've offered, sir, my life for his;
Of my soul I did not speak.
Oh where, think you, would be the goal,
Were I to sell the priceless pearl,
That gives my mortal being light?
And what reward beyond the grave?
Nay! Death would sweeter be by far
To me—to him, than life with shame
Imbedded in my heart; in his but grief.

Buff

The soul is but a passing whim,
In my opinion, lass; the heart
A fickle instrument
To play upon as mood directs;
And thine is not unlike the rest.

Dorothy

Say not these *things!*

Buff

Does truth of *things* offend you, lass?

Dorothy

You know little of my heart.

Buff

I know yours by mine.
 'Tis what the will directs that rules
 The heart; and with two wills at odds,
 The stronger must prevail.

Dorothy

Leave me Sir; I must have sleep.

(Laughter can be heard in the next room).

Buff

There's time for sleep
 When revelers shall end their feast
 I'm sleepy too—so sleepy, lass.
 What say you to some stimulant?
(Turns wine into mugs).

Dorothy

Nay.
 Wine is like a treacherous friend;
 It favors and betrays in one,
 The trust and faith one fain would lend,
 Leaving yet, a friend undone.

Buff

Ha, ha!
 Your philosophy is good lass;
 But in this case can least apply,

Since treachery is wont to pass
The motive for our friendship by.

(Offering her the wine).

Come, let's weld our friendship firmly, lass.

Dorothy

True friendship needs no welding, sir.

Buff

But I would have you more than friend!

(Drinks his wine).

Dorothy

What mean you, pray?

Buff

I'd have you mine to have and hold—
Heart to heart; and even more—
Soul to soul and life to life .

I love you, lass.

(Attempts to seize her hand).

Dorothy

Stay! What love is this?

Buff

The love that only passion knows;
The love that masters evil minds:
The love that cowardice bestows
Upon the virtue it snares and binds.

(Turns more wine and drinks).

You came here, lass, to pay a debt,
And by the gods! you shall make good,
Or at that window you shall hear
The shot that snuffs your lover's life.

Dorothy

A coward, sir, you are indeed!
For only cowardice ensnares
Before it kills. I'm well entrapped,
A helpless mortal with a brute.
No weapon have I for defense,
Save woman's courage and her right
To kill, or die for honor's sake.
Give me the equal of your steel,
And with a woman's strength and skill,
I'll wage you to the bitter end.

Buff

(Roaring with laughter).

A clever task 'twould be, no doubt,
To parry woman's thrusts with steel;

But with a woman's tongue and wit,
Though keener edged, I'd rather deal.

(Laughs and drinks again).

Dorothy

You'll not grant me an equal chance?

Buff

Nay, nay, lass, nay, nay.

(Drawing his rapier and staggering toward her).

My steel is like a needle point.
I fear lest I by chance might prick
Those beautiful eyes, or find
By accident, that heart of yours.

Dorothy

I'll take a chance; give me your steel,
And you go fetch another.

Buff

Nay, nay, my pretty one.
You ne'er were made for fighting men;
You best can win by loving them.

(Advancing cautiously he seizes hold of Dorothy. She struggles and frees herself taking with her his rapier which he had returned to its sheath. She holds him at bay).

Dorothy

Hold!
My steel is like a needle point!
I fear lest I by chance might prick
Those *wine-lit* eyes; or find
By accident, that *heart of yours*.

(Buff makes several attempts to recover the rapier which Dorothy skillfully wields, but fearing its point, he gives up trying, and seizing a chair is about to break his way in, when the clattering hoofs of a running horse heard outside, followed by roars of laughter, exclaiming voices and a loud rap on the door. He sets the chair down and opens the door. Buff's three fellow officers enter, and seeing Dorothy standing defiantly with rapier in her hand, they roar with laughter).

Buff

Silence!
Why this rumpus? What's in the wind?

Archibald

A courier's come, sir.

Buff

Let him come in.

(The courier enters and salutes).

Make your story brief, lad.

Courier

A stir in the enemy camp, sir,
Bodes well of a planned attack, sir.

Buff

By what unusual circumstance?

Courier

A spy within our lines has passed
In safety to the enemy's, sir.

Buff

What was he like?

Courier

I cannot say, sir, other than
He shoots at night with deadly aim.

Buff

Can no one his dimensions give—
Tall and lean or short and fat?

Courier

He was not seen, just felt, that's all.

Buff

Just felt say you?

Courier

His bullets, sir, I mean.
He felled two pickets with one shot.

Buff

The devil he did!

(The roll of a drum is heard).

Hark! The call to arms!

Courier

The pickets, sir, are coming in.

Buff

Swing to your horse lad! Give him spur
Till every devilish man's astir.

(The courier salutes and exits. Buff follows to the door and shouts to his officers who have left the room).

To your commands!

(The officers can be heard clinking mugs and laughing).

Fools!
You've drunk enough; make haste!
Lest rout shall come on time you waste.
To your commands, I say!

Archibald

(*Shouting back*).

We go!

Claude

Farewell!

Cyril

And luck to you!

Buff

Bah!

(*Slamming the door*).

As for you, sweet one, I leave you
To your heart's content. Nor do I fear
That you'll escape ere I return,
Since I your lover's life shall
Claim as fair reprisal.

Dorothy

Farewell to you! And ere you go
I give you back your rapier,
Lest you by chance somewhere may meet your match.

Buff

Ha, ha!

(Taking the weapon and resting its point over Dorothy's heart).

This trusty steel has ne'er yet failed.
I'll measure skill with any man.

(The roll of a drum and commanding voices are heard again).

Farewell!

(When Buff exits, Dorothy bolts the door, and snuffing all the candles but one, throws herself on the bed and weeps.)

(Presently Molly's face appears at the window. She taps lightly on the pane. Dorothy raises her head and listens. Molly taps again. Dorothy springs up, and discovering Molly raises the sash. The Indian girl climbs in).

Molly

Hush! You me; me you!

(Molly hurriedly removes her outer garments, indicating to Dorothy to do the same).

You go; me stay!

Dorothy

Nay, nay.
My escape will only mean his death.

Molly

Huh! Him free!

Dorothy

Escaped?

Molly

Hm-m, him 'scape. Little squaw she 'scape.

(Molly fairly tears Dorothy's garments from her, and frantically assists her in donning her own).

Huh! You me! They no can tell!
By the river bank be waiting,
Where the birch tree and the pine tree,
Like two old friends lean together,
O'er the waters in the moonlight.
In the sweet-grass 'neath the up-roots,
You will find my bark canoe hid;
Launch it ready for my coming;
Let no grating sands betray you.
Down the river we will journey,
Like two sisters; like two daughters
Of the red man or the white man,
To the wigwam of my father.
There my father will receive you,
Like a daughter of his own race;
In his wigwam by the river,
He will greet you as my sister.
He will tell you, there in comfort.

You shall wait for him—your lover.
 He is coming ere the sunrise,
 To the wigwam of my father.

(Dorothy exits by the window. Molly completes her make-up, to represent Dorothy, before the mirror. She discovers the mug of untouched wine on the table, and reasons that it must have been turned out for Dorothy, while the empty mug was the colonel's. She turns the wine out, replacing the mug on the table. Taking a package from the folds of her inner garments, she examines it).

Huh! Make him heap much sleepy.

(Replacing the package she draws out another).

Huh! Him wolf! Me kill!

(She shakes the poison powder into Buff's mug, and closing the window she throws herself on the bed with her face to the wall, and feigns sleep).

(Enter Buff staggering drunk).

Buff

Sleeping are you, pretty thing?
 I'm lucky e'en to find you here,
 Though you lack sociability.
 Your lover, lass, has tricked me well;
 Or should I say that cunning squaw,
 Since she a dozen guards has drugged,
 And set him free?

Ha, ha, ha.

A clever trick; but woe to her!

What say you, lass? Awake and take

A sip of wine with me.

(He fills the poison mug with wine, and placing it at the other end of the table, empties the crock jug into the other mug and drinks).

Awake, awake! You seem like dead.

'Tis true I tell you; he has flown—

Your lover lass; but I have you.

Ha, ha, ha!

(He staggers toward the bed).

A faithful lover, lass, have you.

To save himself he's sacrificed

The sweetest little dame in town,

And won for him a coward's name.

Come ope those pretty eyes for me,

Nor let me see one tear-stained cheek.

(He takes her hand in his, and discovering it is the Indian girl, he jerks her violently to her feet and hurls her across the room).

Ho, ho, my fine lady!

'Tis you, you little traitor!

(Molly tries to escape by the door but finds it locked; she starts for the window, but Buff blocks her way).

Molly

Me surrender ; me your prisoner.
Me be good prisoner.

Buff

Ha, ha, ha!
Good or bad 'twill be the same,
When Death awaiting you shall claim
Reward for all your treachery.

Molly

Huh! Me no 'fraid.
The Great Spirit will protect me,
As he did the little white squaw ;
As he did the brave—her lover ;
Gave to them His love and mercy.
All the night long till the sunrise,
They will haunt the Evil Spirit.
Count they will the stars of Heaven,
Every one a prayer and pleading,
To the Spirit—the Great Father ;
He will hear their lamentations.
In the darkness of the wildwood,
In the fragrant west wind blowing,
They will find Him, they will send Him
To your wigwam to protect me.

Buff

I fear you will not fare as well,
As did your friends ; nor will their prayers

Be answered as were yours, for Death
Already lurks within these walls.

Molly

Huh! Me no 'fraid.
Since I was a little papoose,
Heard I have my father teaching,
Death is but a change in living,
Like a journey to some strange land;
Like the passing from a shadow,
As we would into the sunshine.
Heard I have him tell his people,
That we go there as we came here,
Come and go as do the flowers;
Come we back here in the spirit,
As the fragrance from the sweet-grass,
As the rain comes from the heavens,
Purified by the Great Spirit.
Huh! Me no 'fraid.

Buff

A pretty theory I admit,
And since you're not afraid to die,
I'll make arrangements just to give
Your hypothetic view a try.

(Shots are heard in the distance followed by commanding voices outside).

Ho, ho!
The enemy's come to life,

And I must haste to join the fray.

(Draws his rapier).

Molly

Ugh!

You go; me stay. Me be good prisoner.

Buff

Nay!

I'd sooner trust a hungry wolf

With my dead carcass, than trust you

Out of my sight; and ere I go

To battle men, I'll make you safe.

I'll take my pay for your deceit;

I'll have your blood upon my steel;

I'll send your soul down to its hell

Ere I depart!

(Outside the sound of battle increases. Buff in his growing rage seizes his wine crock and finding it empty, flings it violently to the floor. With his rapier he sweeps his empty mug from the table, and seizing up the poison mug raises it to his lips. A violent knock comes at the door. He sets the mug down and listens. Another loud knock is heard).

Who goes there?

Worth

It is I!

Open ere I burst the lock!

Buff

I know that voice; it spells defeat!

(Turning to Molly).

And you it is who turned the tide!
Go to your doom!

(Molly turns to flee, but Buff's steel pierces her back and she sinks to the floor. The door bursts open and Worth enters followed by two guards).

Worth

At last we meet on even terms!

(Discovering Molly, whom he thinks is Dorothy, on the floor).

My God!
What's this! You've slain my love!

Buff

Since you have failed to keep your trust,
Her blood is on your hands, not mine.

Worth

Then by the gods, you shall go too!
Stand back men!

(The two officers engage in a fierce combat. Soon Worth twists Buff's steel from his hand. Twice more he repeats the trick and twice more gives him chance).

Seize him men!
He's lost his nerve. I cannot have
A weakling's blood upon my hands.
Let him go the usual way.

(The guards seize Buff and drag him from the room. Worth kneels beside Molly's body. He touches her garments and tenderly caresses her head. Suddenly he catches up a lock of her hair. He springs to his feet and lights all the candles. Then on his knees he lifts the Indian girl up tenderly and turns her face up to his).

Molly!

(The door opens and Dorothy enters just as he lays the Indian girl down. She is pale and weak and is about to fall when Worth looks up. He springs to his feet and she staggers into his arms).

Dorothy!

(Unable to speak in her weakened condition Worth seizes the poison mug and forces her to drink from it. She looks up at him and smiles. He picks her up and places her on the bed, and returning for the mug of wine, holds it up).

Dorothy, see! Open your eyes.
I drink to you and love's reward.

(He empties the mug and falls dead beside her).

*(A single volley of shots is heard in the distance,
and then a sentry's cry):*

All is well!

CURTAIN

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